

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON SCREWORM COMMISSION

REF: MEXICO 20896

1. REFTEL REPORTED NEWS REPORT ALLEDGING FRAUD IN US/
MEXICO SCREWORM COMMISSION AND THE THREAT OF A STRIKE
WHICH WOULD HAVE SET BACK EFFORTS OF THE COMMISSION.
THIS MESSAGE WILL ADDRESS SEVERAL POINTS RAISED IN PRESS.
2. THERE WILL BE NO STRIKE. FEDERICO MEDINA MARTINEZ,
WHO IS ERRONEOUSLY NOTED IN PRESS AS HEADING THE WORKERS
UNION, IS A MEXICAN EMPLOYEE OF THE JOINT COMMISSION WHO
HAS BEEN ON SICK LEAVE SINCE JUNE 1977. DURING THIS
PERIOD HE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN ATTEMPTS TO ORGAN-
IZEAUNION, THREATENING STRIKES IN TAMPICO, LA PAZ, GUA-
DALAJARA, AND TUXLA GUTIERREZ. HE DID GATHER SOME FOL-
LOWING, BUT THE MEXICAN SECRETARIAT OF LABOR RULED ON
NOVEMBER 30 THAT MEDINA'S UNION COULD NOT BE RECOGNIZED,
THAT THE STRIKE MEDINA HAD PROPOSED FOR DECEMBER 15 COULD
NOT TAKE PLACE, AND ORDERED THE FILES ON THE MATTER CLOSED.

3. A LEGAL UNION ALREADY EXISTS AMONG THE PLANT WORKERS

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AT TUXLA GUTIERREZ. THIS IS THE ONLY LEGAL UNION AMONG
WORKERS OF THE JOINT COMMISSION. THIS UNION HAS NEVER
BEEN INVOLVED IN STRIKE THREATS.

4. THE ALLEGATION IS MADE THAT THE MEXICAN CO-DIRECTOR,
DR. JAIME VELAZQUEZ, ORDERED FIRINGS AND SUSPENSIONS AS
REPRISALS FOR FORMING A UNION. WE CAN NEITHER CONFIRM

NOR DENY THIS, BUT WE DO KNOW THAT HIS REPRESENTATIVE UNILATERALLY MADE SUCH A THREAT. DECISIONS ON FIRING AND SUSPENSION MUST BE APPROVED BILATERALLY (I.E. BY BOTH US AND MEXICAN SIDES) AND NO SUCH ACTIONS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. THUS WHILE A THREAT MAY HAVE BEEN MADE, NO ONE HAS BEEN SUSPENDED OR DISMISSED.

5. THE ONLY INDICATION OF FRAUD OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE STEMS FROM A CHARGE OF JOB-SELLING LEVELED AGAINST A MEXICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WORKING FOR THE COMMISSION IN PLANT ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION. THE MEXICAN SECTION OF THE COMMISSION UNILATERALLY INVESTIGATED THE CHARGE AND DECLARED IT UNFOUNDED BUT AT THE SAME TIME ONE INDIVIDUAL WAS TERMINATED. THE US SECTION THEN PUSHED FOR ORGANIZATION OF AN INVESTIGATIVE UNIT IN THE COMMISSION, WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE WOULD BE TO INVESTIGATE CHARGES OF FRAUD AND OTHER WRONG DOING, AND TO RECOMMEND TO THE DIRECTORS APPROPRIATE ACTION. ALTHOUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS INVESTIGATIVE UNIT WAS VETOED BY THE MEXICAN SECTION, THE US SIDE HAS NOT CEASED IN ITS EFFORTS TO CREATE SUCH A UNIT. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THENEWS STORY MAY HAVE STRENGTHENED THE HAND OF THE US SIDE IN THIS REGARD.

6. THE ALLEGATION OF DRUNKEDNESS AND DESPOTISM AGAINST THE MEXICAN CO-DIRECTOR OF THE PLANT AT TUXLA GUTIERREZ APPARENTLY HAS SOME BASIS IN FACT. HE HAS BEEN ASKED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPEAR BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE THIS WEEK TO EXPLAIN HIS ACTIONS. AS AN ASIDE, HE IS REPORTED TO BE THE BROTHER-IN-LAW OF DR. VELAZQUEZ, THE MEXICAN CO-DIRECTOR OF THE SCREWORM COMMISSION.

7. SALARIES ARE REVIEWED PERIODICALLY AND ARE FELT TO BE IN LINE WITH THOSE BEING PAID BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

8. EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE BUDGET FOR OPERATING THE JOINT COMMISSION COMES FROM ALLOCATIONS MADE TO USDA FROM THE US TREASURY NOT FROM TEXAS CATTLEMEN. DR. MARCO ANTONIO VILLASENOR WAS APPOINTED THE FIRST MEXICAN DIRECTOR OF THE COMMISSION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT ON AUGUST 28, 1972 (NOT ELEVEN YEARS AGO). HE WAS REPLACED AS DIRECTOR IN JANUARY 1977.

9. IN SHORT, THE PRESS REPORT WAS FILLED WITH ERRORS AND HALF-TRUTHS AND WAS BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH A DISGRNTLED EMPLOYEE WHOSE ATTEMPTS TO ORGANIZE A UNION HAD BEEN FRUSTRATED BY THE GOM. IF, HOWEVER, IT RESULTS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INVESTIGATIVE UNIT AND THE REPLACEMENT OF THE MEXICAN PLANT DIRECTOR AT TUXLA

GUTIERREZ SOME GOOD WILL HAVE COME FROM THE MATTER.
LUCEY

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